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**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Order Instituting Rulemaking Regarding  
Revisions to the California Universal  
Telephone Service (LifeLine) Program

Rulemaking 11-03-013  
(Filed March 24, 2011)

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE'S RULING REQUESTING COMMENTS ON  
THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE CALIFORNIA LIFELINE PROGRAM**

**Background**

On January 25, 2017, the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) issued Decision 17-01-032 modifying California LifeLine to harmonize it with elements of the Federal Lifeline program that changed as the result of Federal Communications Commission *In the Matter of Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, WC Dkt Nos. 11-42, 09-0197, *Third Report and Order, Further Report and Order, and Order on Reconsideration*, FCC 16-38 (rel. April 27, 2016) (2016 Lifeline Modernization Order).<sup>1</sup> The Commission removed the following federal assistance programs as meeting the qualifying program criteria for California LifeLine:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP);
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP); and

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<sup>1</sup> D.17-01-032 also addressed the reimbursement of service connection/activation charges for California LifeLine wireless telephone services, implemented a 60-day benefit portability freeze for California LifeLine, and added a California LifeLine enrollment request freeze.

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

The FCC also required the removal of state-specified eligibility criteria. As a result, the Commission removed Women Infants and Children (WIC) and decreased the income eligibility to 135 percent of the federal poverty guideline. The Commission also added the Veterans Pension benefit or Survivors Pension benefit as meeting the qualifying program criteria for California LifeLine. The Commission removed the requirement that the Communications Division (CD) annually adjust the California LifeLine income limits for inflation based on the Federal Consumer Price Index-Urban Areas and notify California LifeLine Service Providers of the changes. The Commission instructed the Communications Division (CD) to work with California LifeLine Service Providers to implement the changes to the eligibility criteria.

As relevant here, the FCC granted the Commission until October 31, 2017 to implement the changes to the eligibility criteria except for the addition of the Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit Program.<sup>2</sup>

On May 24, 2017, the assigned Commissioner issued an Assigned Commissioner Ruling (ACR) Notifying California LifeLine Providers of the California LifeLine Annual Income Limits and Specifying that Revised Eligibility Criteria Shall Become Effective November 1, 2017 ACR. The ACR clarified that full implementation of the revised eligibility criteria would become effective on November 1, 2017 unless the Commission took further action and issued a decision addressing the issue. This ruling seeks the input of parties to this proceeding on whether the California LifeLine Program should maintain the

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<sup>2</sup> The FCC required this program be added by December 2, 2016, which the Commission so added.

current eligibility criteria after October 31, 2017 and if so, what issues the Commission should address.

**Request for Comment on California LifeLine Eligibility Criteria**

Parties to this proceeding are invited to file comments and reply comments regarding the current eligibility criteria for the California LifeLine Program. If the California LifeLine Program maintains the current eligibility criteria after October 31, 2017:

1. Should the Program or the Participant make up all or a portion of the federal Lifeline support for participants who would qualify under California's eligibility criteria but not the federal eligibility criteria? Please justify your position.
2. What changes would be required for the data exchange with the California LifeLine Administrator?
3. What changes would be required to the claim form?
4. What changes would be required to the phone bills?
5. What changes would be required to the application and renewal forms?
6. What changes would be required to General Order 153?
7. What changes would be required for participants living on federally recognized Tribal lands?
8. Are there additional implementation issues the Commission should consider?

Parties shall file comments by July 3, 2017. Reply comments must be filed by July 10, 2017.

**IT IS SO RULED.**

Dated June 28, 2017, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ KATHERINE KWAN  
MACDONALD

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Katherine Kwan MacDonald  
Administrative Law Judge